

Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

2007 DROUGHT AND BURN BAN SITUATION REPORT # 23 22 May 2008, 1500 Hours

New Information in Bold Italic Type

SUMMARY

Statewide precipitation for the previous water year (1 October 2006 through 30 September 2007) was below normal. Statewide precipitation for the period from October 1, 2006 until **May 16, 2008** was below normal. **Statewide precipitation for the period from January 1, 2008 through May 16, 2008 was in the normal range and precipitation is in the normal range for each of the drought monitoring regions for this period.** Precipitation greater than 85% of normal is considered to be in the normal range.

EXECUTIVE ACTION

EOC Activation: The Virginia Emergency Operations Center is at **Routine Operations.**

State of Emergency: Governor Timothy M. Kaine declared a Statewide Emergency on 18 October 2007 and imposed a statewide ban on all open burning. The statewide ban on open burning was lifted by Governor Timothy M. Kaine on 15 November. The Statewide Emergency remains in effect to deal with potential or actual drought related issues.

Governor Kaine requested that the Secretary of the US Department of Agriculture declare Virginia a statewide disaster area due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and high temperatures in 2007. **93 counties and 34 independent cities received a Department of Agricultural Secretarial disaster designation in 2007 as primary natural disaster areas. York and Arlington counties and the independent cities of Alexandria, Bristol, Falls Church, Poquoson and Norton were named contiguous disaster areas.**

Governor Kaine sent a letter to all localities dated 29 November 2007 advising them that the most effective water restrictions are those developed at the local level and asked that localities review their drought water conservation and contingency plans associated with public waterworks and if there was no current drought plan, one should be developed. Governor Kaine also asked localities to review their local ordinances requiring mandatory non-essential water use restrictions during declared emergencies and assure that the ordinances are consistent with the Virginia Drought Assessment and Response Plan and if the locality has not adopted such ordinances, they should consider the development and adoption of these. **Despite recent rains, the potential for the Commonwealth to experience drought impacts this summer remains significant and a forum is scheduled, 2 June 2008, at the Library of Virginia to address water conservation and drought topics.** DEQ – [COV Drought Response Plan](#); [Forum Invite](#)

Executive Order: [Executive Order 57 \(2007\)](#)

WEATHER FORECAST

Southwest VA: Thursday, 22 May: Mostly sunny; high temperatures in the low to mid 70's; winds 5-10 MPH. Thursday night: Mostly cloudy; low temperatures in the low to mid 50's; light and variable winds. Friday, 25 May: Mostly cloudy; 20% chance of showers and thunderstorms in the

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afternoon; high temperatures in the low to mid 70's; light and variable winds. Friday night: Partly cloudy; 20% chance of showers and thunderstorms; low temperatures in the low to mid 50's; light and variable winds.

OPERATIONS SECTION

ESF 1 – Transportation: Virginia Department of Transportation and Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles jointly authorized an extension of the temporary waiver of registration and license requirements along with normal weight and width restrictions for the purpose of ensuring essential emergency relief supplies reach the disaster area in a timely manner through 0600 hours, 15 June 2008. [Waivers to Carriers Extended](#)

ESF 3 – Public Works & Engineering: Virginia Department of Health has not reported any impacts to public water supplies that have compromised their ability to provide the needs of their customers. **35 systems remain on water conservation measures; 4 remain on mandatory water conservation and 31 remain on voluntary water conservation requirements.**

Waterworks are encouraged to develop water conservation and contingency plans and local governments are encouraged to adopt local water conservation ordinances. [DEQ Water Conservation Tips](#)

ESF 4 – Firefighting: *Department of Forestry reported that the spring wildfire season has ended and that recent precipitation has significantly increased forest fuel moisture conditions. Since January 1, 2008, 995 wildfires burned 25,995 acres, and damaged or destroyed 15 homes and 44 other structures. These numbers are well above 5 and 10 year averages for the period.* The next real threat for significant wildfire development will return later this fall. The most intense single day of wildfire activity in the preceding 70 years occurred on February 10, 2008. During this event wildfires driven by unusually high winds were reported in 62 localities across the Commonwealth. There were 357 reported fires that burned almost 14,000 acres, and damaged or destroyed 9 homes, 19 other structures and 7 vehicles. [VDOF Fire Summation Report 22 May 08](#)

ESF 5 – Emergency Management: VDEM posting event related items to WebEOC under event titled "WebEOC, 2007-10 Drought and Burn Ban"; Participating as member of the Drought Monitoring Task Force; assessing the impact across the Commonwealth; limited exemption of hours worked for hay and feed carriers was extended until 0600 hours, 15 June 2008. VDEM Operations Director, Harry Colestock, and VDEM Recovery and Mitigation Director, George Roarty, attended a North Carolina Emergency Management Forum in Asheville, North Carolina, that discussed the drought in the Southeastern US. Points discussed for North Carolina were:

- Description of a tiered system to identify water systems vulnerability to drought and a group of functional state task forces to address specific drought issues
- State actions included water basin meetings, tracking of public water system status and promotion of conservation (especially industries and big users).
 - Governor told the state's 30 most vulnerable communities that they need to take actions now to ensure adequate water during the potential summer drought
 - Governor directed his Dept of Natural Resources to quickly identify the funding needed to make sure undue amounts of water are not being lost to leaks and other structural problems
 - Governor also requested that public water systems adopt conservation-based rate structures to encourage both residential and commercial customers to save water
- Virginia's plans and current efforts were discussed and included background of recent droughts, development of the Virginia Drought Assessment and Response Plan, current drought impacts, Governor's Emergency Declaration, resources in readiness, water system problems exacerbated by drought and potential funding and other resources to mitigate the impacts of the drought situation.

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ESF 11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources: Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services reported that according to the USDA Crop Weather Report ***released on May 12, 2008, 90% of topsoil moisture was adequate. Most areas in the state continue to receive significant rain but the total rainfall year-to-date is still below normal. The western and southwestern parts of the state did not receive the heavy rain received by the eastern portion of the state in April. The recent rains significantly relieved drought conditions for Virginia farmers. Many areas reported wet conditions caused planting delays for corn and tobacco. With the condition of the hay crop improving, it appears as if hay shortages will be reduced or even eliminated.*** As a result of the hay shortages caused by the drought, the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission has allocated \$500,000.00 to livestock producers in the Southwest Virginia counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Grayson, Lee, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe. All Virginia localities have access to federal drought disaster assistance. ***Recent rains temporarily swelled small streams, creeks and rivers, but water levels quickly returned to below normal indicating low ground water levels. April brought good rainfall to Northwest and Central Virginia, but Southwest Virginia is still very dry. In Central Virginia water levels are improved but not normal and the few scattered showers in Southwest Virginia did little to improve the drought situation. For the first time since November 2007, Northwestern Virginia surpassed normal average monthly rainfall for April and Shenandoah County cautioned its citizens to conserve well water since very little refill has occurred over the winter months.*** [VDACS Drought Related Information](#); [VDACS Hay Clearing House](#)

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries reports that boat ramps are all open with the exception of those closed for renovation or repairs. Spring trout stocking is progressing on schedule with the only impacts being fish that are smaller than average due to the previous year's drought that reduced hatchery flows and necessitated reducing feeding. Reservoir and stream flows have benefited significantly from the recent rains. While the intensity of drought impacts has decreased significantly during the last month, the lower than normal level of ground water is still cause for some concern regarding the potential for drought impacts to intensify as the growing season progresses. The significantly wet period from April 1 until now will likely forestall the development of drought conditions until early July. It is important to remember that localized drought impacts, particularly agricultural drought impacts, are a normal occurrence in an "average" Virginia summer.

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality chairs the Virginia Drought Monitoring Task Force and reports the latest NOAA drought monitor indicates significant improvement in drought conditions throughout the Commonwealth. Currently less than 8% of the Commonwealth is experiencing drought conditions. The NOAA seasonal drought outlook through August 2008 indicates that drought conditions are likely to improve. Ground water levels in the vast majority of dedicated monitoring wells have shown increases in water levels in the last month indicating a period of ground water recharge; ground water levels are generally in the lower range of expected water levels in areas east of I-95 and are generally lower than normal in the area west of I-95. All major reservoirs are full or nearly full. Lake Anna was actually one foot above full last week due to heavy rains. Kerr Reservoir is five feet above the guide curve and the Army Corps of Engineers is attempting to lower the elevation of the lake without flooding low lying farmland and bottomland hardwood forests. Lake Philpott and Lake Moomaw, two other large Corps of Engineers lakes, are also full. Smith Mountain Lake is full and Carvins Cove Reservoir is 95% full and Spring Hollow Reservoir is 85% full. [US Drought Monitor - VA](#); [US Seasonal Drought Outlook](#); [USGS Water Watch-Drought](#); [DMTF Report May 2008](#)

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ESF 15 – External Affairs: Public Affairs Officers from VDEM, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Forestry and Department of Health and representatives from VDH Office of Drinking Water developed and presented a comprehensive state communication plan to the Drought Monitoring Task Force on 22 February and are incorporating recommendations into the plan, prior to submission for final approval.

PLANNING SECTION

Situation/Documentation Unit: Monitoring situation and issuing monthly situation reports. ***Next Situation Report will be issued Thursday, 26 June 2008.***

LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Wise County declared a local emergency on 31 October due to drought conditions that caused a severe raw water supply shortage to retail water customers. The Mayor and Town Council of Appalachia along with Wise County declared a water emergency and implemented conservation measures and prohibited non-essential water usage. An Emergency Virginia Water Permit was issued by the VA Department of Environmental Quality that permits withdrawal of 500,000 gallons per day from the Powell River and pumps it to their reservoir.

The Town of Dungannon and Scott County declared a local emergency on 9 November due to a water infrastructure issue involving the Town of Dungannon water system. Scott County Emergency Management reported on 24 March 2008 that Dungannon Water Department personnel reported the major leak had been repaired and that the water storage tank was refilled. Water sample testing by VA Department of Health was conducted and approved and the boil water notice was lifted. The Scott County Board of Supervisors closed the local emergency on 2 April 2008.

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